THE
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DEDICATED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF JUDAISM AS A RELIGIOUS CIVILIZATION, TO THE UPBUILDING OF ISRAEL'S ANCIENT HOMELAND, AND TO THE FURTHERANCE OF UNIVERSAL FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND PEACE.

Vol. III. December 3, 1937 Kislev 29, 5698 No. 15

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By Nathan A. Barack

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EDITORIALS

Self-Taxation in Jewish Communities

THE campaign of the Federations for the Support of Jewish Philanthropic Societies and the Brooklyn Federation of Jewish Charities marks the first united effort in behalf of 116 medical and social welfare institutions in Greater New York. Under the direction of Mr. Walter N. Rothschild, more than 4,500 volunteer workers will endeavor to raise $6,250,000, the largest sum ever set for welfare and philanthropic groups in the history of the United States. The need is most urgent, and this campaign should receive the generous support of the Jews of New York.

This occasion offers us an opportune peg on which to hang our thoughts concerning our philanthropic campaigns. The growth of Federations to raise funds for the maintenance of Jewish communal institutions marked a great step forward in the rationalization of Jewish communal life. Those Federations have proved themselves effective instrumentalities of which we may well be proud. They have proved themselves more than mere collecting and distributing agencies; they are expressions of a growing awareness, in many communities, of common Jewish responsibilities. If, therefore, we are critical of Federations it is not because we are unaware of their great services; it is rather because we would make a good thing somewhat better.

In Federation activities, as conducted at present, there are two fundamental weaknesses. In the first place, an extremely small proportion of the Jewish community is conscious of the Federation of Jewish Charities; the rest of the Jewish community has no share in its maintenance, and does not have developed in it a sense of responsibility for its support. In the second place, the "campaign" method of obtaining funds—the exhausting pursuit of prospects, the emotional whipping up that must be endured, the use of what ofttimes amounts to social and economic blackmail to extort money from unwilling givers—leaves the community spiritually and morally exhausted. Consequently, what ought to be a genuine spiritual experience, giving significance to Jewish communal living, becomes instead a difficult, unpleasant task that must be carried on by a handful of loyal and devoted workers who, at the end, are often tempted to say, Never again!

Different communities have varied the methods used to raise funds for their Jewish institutions. Some join with non-Jewish groups, as in Philadelphia, and conduct a United Welfare Campaign. Others have Community Chests out of which

they draw the necessary funds. But, despite certain benefits in efficiency and in the spirit of fellowship with non-Jewish groups, these united campaigns are, from the Jewish point of view, spiritual losses. The sense of the Jewish community as such disappears.

It is a consummation devoutly to be wished that some of the smaller Jewish communities in this country would explore the possibilities of a self-taxation plan for the maintenance of Jewish communal institutions. Self-taxation is an expression of organic living together for common purposes. Let a group of children form a club, and immediately the question of dues is raised. Each is ready to submit to self-taxation for the common good.

Perhaps money could be spent in no wiser and more creative way than for Federation groups in the larger cities of the country to assemble a body of experts to examine the possibilities in this idea. What we need is such self-taxation, until every Jew who wishes to be identified with the Jewish community will levy upon himself a tax to be used for all Jewish communal purposes. Then campaigns would be launched not for funds, but to enrol Jews into membership in the Jewish community. Jewish communal life would be maintained with far greater dignity and permanency. The influence of such educational campaign on the multitudes of Jews who today have no Jewish communal contacts would be greatly increased. And what today is the expression of charity would become the manifestation of the Jewish community's will to realize the Jewish ideal of social responsibility.

The Campaign Against Social Diseases

THE earnest effort which the American Medical Association is directing toward the control and ultimate elimination of syphilis and gonorrhea should no more require editorial support from the religious press than should similar efforts to combat other epidemic diseases. By now it should be an axiom of our social thinking that disease is an enemy of man and men are in duty bound to fight disease. But, in this particular instance, the fact that the diseases attacked are mainly communicated by sexual intercourse necessitates the violation of a pseudo-religious taboo against the public discussion of sex, for the success of the campaign demands mass-education as to the problems involved. That taboo was sufficiently strong to effect the cancellation of a proposed radio address on the subject by General Johnson.

We call this taboo pseudo-religious, because although it is commonly invoked in the name of religion, it is by no means in conformity with religious tradition in general, and certainly not with the Jewish religious tradition. No literature speaks more frankly and directly about sex matters than the literature of the Bible, unless it be the literature of the Talmud and the later Jewish codes. Sometimes the attitude of genteel reticence about sex is referred to as puritanical, but this is an undue slur on the Puritans. A community would not stigmatize an adulteress by making her wear the scarlet letter A, if it were afraid young people might ask what the letter stood for. It is not on record that any announced sermon on sex sins was ever cancelled in a New England meeting house because children and young people might be present. (This was the reason given for suppressing General Johnson's address.)

The conspiracy of silence on sex matters is characteristic only of the period of transition from the ascetic, other-worldly religion of the Middle Ages, that taught self-abnegation and the renunciation of the world, to the humanistic, this-worldly religion of the future that teaches self-realization and the redemption of the world. From the ascetic point of view, sex is evil in all its manifestations. Its sweets are those of stolen fruit. Even its legitimate satisfaction in marriage is but a concession of divine Grace to human

depravity. The best that can be said about sex from the medieval point of view, is that, by triumphing over it, one may assure himself a life of sexless beatitude in the hereafter. As long as people held these views honestly and with firm conviction, they may have tried all sorts of unsound methods of suppressing the sex impulse, but they took it seriously enough to discuss it plainly and without euphemism.

On the other hand, those whose religion repudiates medieval asceticism and other-worldliness and who feel deeply that the function of religion is to give men faith in the potentialities for good that inhere in human nature also discuss sex problems frankly. They emphasize the importance of religion's reckoning with sex as one of the essential constituents of human nature, for which religion must find a method of functioning consistent with its objectives of personal self-realization and social cooperation and communion. If there is today a great deal of uncertainty as to the concrete rules that would best satisfy the criteria of personal happiness and social welfare, this is all the more reason for throwing the subject open to serious public discussion.

The conspiracy of silence must be regarded as symptomatic of the state of religious doubt and uncertainty characteristic of the present period of transition. When people are still sufficiently bound by tradition not to be willing publicly to repudiate it, but are not sufficiently convinced of its truth publicly to affirm it and privately to conform to it, they then have recourse to evasion. Hush! Hush! this is too holy to talk about, or too profane, or too impolite. If a man wants to indulge, let him do it on the quiet. But it is better not to talk about these things. Then nobody can call one to account, for that bespeaks an evil mind. In this way the conspiracy of silence provides the rationalization for the discrepancy between the behavior and the professions of men in respect to sex. For the discrepancy between creed and deed can be maintained much more easily when it is not exposed to the light of free discussion. And to maintain the discrepancy is always easier than either consistently to conform to an obsolete creed, or to revise one's creed to accord with actual standards of behavior.

Hence the smoke-screen of a respectable reticence to conceal the lack of a decent rational code of sex behavior that can stand the light. All honest religion, whether fundamentalist or modernist, has a positive interest in dispelling that smoke-screen. For the conspiracy of silence has never succeeded and can never succeed in silencing the whispered propaganda of vice, which is all the more seductive because it is whispered.

It is an encouraging sign of the times that the campaign against syphilis and gonorrhea is being conducted in as public a manner as it is and that it has, for the most part, won the support of the general press. We hope that it may accomplish its immediate purpose in the improvement of the public health. But we also wish it success because of a further hope. Perhaps, when people have become accustomed to demand a social control of sex conduct in the interest of physical health, they may also begin to think seriously about its control through education and legislation in the interest of mental health, personal happiness and social welfare.

Eradicate Lynching!

AMONG the many New Deal measures which the Senate is considering during the special session of Congress is the Gavagan-Wagner Anti-Lynching Bill. Of the merits of the measure there can be no question. Can there be anything more important than an effort to remove that blot upon American civilization, lynching? And yet political bickering and filibustering may kill this very vital measure even without a vote on the floor of the Senate.

The issue about which the debate is

being waged in the Senate is whether the Federal Government ought to take steps to reinforce local state efforts to cope with the evils of lynching. According to the opponents of the bill, Federal action would be an unwarranted invasion by the central government into state affairs. It would nullify local self-government. There is no more justification for such procedure, these men argue, than there would be for the Federal Government to interfere with the manner in which the states are dealing with other crimes, such as theft or murder. What these men fail to see, of course, is that crime generally is committed by an individual, and the community at large may be counted upon to exercise the full vigor of the law in combatting it. Lynching, however, is not committed by an individual but by mobs, by a community that has grown lawless. The community which has itself violated the law cannot become the judge of its own actions. The federal authorities that represent the nation at large, with whom lynching is a crime like any other crime, that look at the question objectively, without racial or religious prejudices, can do a tremendous amount of good to supplement the forces of law and order in those areas of the country where they may break down during moments by hysteria.

Furthermore, the bill under consideration provides that if a person is injured or killed by a mob, his heirs may bring suit in the federal courts to recover damages of not less than $2,000 or more than $10,000, from the local community where the crime was committed. Local authorities are also made responsible and will be subjected to legal action if they knowingly evade their obligations to protect a prisoner and permit a lynching to take place. Such action would without a doubt bring about a strengthening of respect and the authority of the law would go a long way toward eradicating lynching from those areas where it now seems to be condoned.

The field of lynching is not confined to the South, nor are colored people its only victims. Only recently a lynching of white people occurred in California and Governor Rolf, charged with the responsibility of maintaining law and order in the state, applauded the action of the mob. The attacking and beating to death of Shoemaker in Florida more recently likewise went unpunished. One cannot forget the martyrdom of Leo Frank. The mob spirit fanned by the flames of racial, religious and class prejudices may hit anywhere. Only the Federal Government which can at all times show much more calm and objectivity and can rise higher above class and religious prejudices, must step in.

If the present bill is defeated in the Senate it will have to be introduced again. The struggle for such a measure has been going on for the last thirty years and the forces of liberalism, of law and order in America dare not rest until it becomes the law of the land. Lynching must be eradicated from the civilization of America.

Jewish Social Welfare: What Is Its Future?

By Samuel C. Kohs

Foreword

IT may come as news to many American Jews that there exists a "National Conference of Jewish Social Welfare." The title might lead one to assume that this conference provides the opportunity for all organizations and agencies interested in, or at work on, one or another of the many problems affecting Jewish welfare to meet and discuss their findings, their recognition of need and to develop such coordinations in their work as these needs demand. This, however, is the case to a very limited and, to an extent, very ineffective degree. A bit of history of this organization will aid in making this condition apparent.

I

Backgrounds

In July, 1885, representatives of thirty-one Jewish charitable and philanthropic agencies from all parts of the United States gathered in St. Louis, upon the call of the St. Louis and Louisville relief societies, in order to coordinate the relief and welfare services throughout the country, to eliminate the evils of irresponsibly "passing on" dependent persons and families from one community to another, and to plan to distribute the stream of immigration from the Eastern seaboard more intelligently. This group became organized as the "Associated Hebrew Charities of the United States," functioned for a few short years and by 1890 was no longer in existence. But the multiplication and the intensification of relief and service problems with which local philanthropic agencies were compelled to deal, in the period between 1890 and 1900, forced the various organizations directly concerned with charitable endeavors, especially on behalf of immigrant groups, to come together again in Chicago (June, 1900).

This first meeting of the "National Conference of Jewish Charities in the United States" was presided over by Max Senior of Cincinnati, who in his opening comments, as president of that conference, remarked: "It seems, as perhaps some of those present may remember, that an attempt was made to form a similar union some years ago at St. Louis. It failed, for lack of that feeling of unity and common interest which Dr. Wise [Isaac M. Wise] did so much to establish, and I regret to say that Cincinnati at that time was most largely responsible for the failure of the movement. She has seen the error of her ways, and will attempt to atone by her zeal now for her shortcomings in the past." In his peroration, he urged: "Let us hold up each other's hands: let us give to each other of the wealth of our experience; let us labor together where each alone is unequal to the task. Let us be wise, thoughtful, unselfish and strenuous. . . ."

We should keep in mind that this Conference originally represented a permanent association of *organizational* and not of individual members. Individuals counted only in so far as they represented or spoke, as elected delegates, for the organizations with which they were associated. This Conference continued meeting every alternate even year until 1918. Although the National Conference of Jewish Charities, consisting largely of lay persons, began functioning in 1900, not until 1909 did the professional social workers gather together in a group of their own. One factor was their attendance at the annual non-Jewish, general, National Conference of Charities and Corrections, the other was the need for meeting by themselves at the biennial meetings of the Jewish Conference. At first, in 1909, these meetings were quite informal, then the group came to be known as the "Section of Social Workers" of the National Conference of Jewish Charities, and by 1913 were organized as the National Association of Jewish Social Workers and met in the alternate odd years until the tenth biennial meeting of

the Jewish Conference in 1918, held in Kansas City, when it was unanimously voted by both groups that thereafter they meet annually as a body. So in 1919, both lay and professionals met as one group and voted to change the name of the conference to the National Conference of Jewish Social Service.

In summarizing its first twenty years of achievement the Conference in 1919 listed the following: Creation of the National Desertion Bureau, the establishment of Transportation Rules governing the care and handling of transient individuals and families, the creation of a Transient Registration Bureau, the organization of a National Jewish Committee on Tuberculosis, the establishment of a Registration Bureau for Tubercular Dependents, a Field Service for Jewish Agencies, the Bureau of Jewish Social Research, the publication of "Jewish Charities," a national Jewish social service monthly, and numerous other services and activities. By 1929 it could add the establishment of the Training (now Graduate) School for Jewish Social Work, and encouraging the development of the National Appeals Information Service which now has grown into the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds.

II

Rise of the Professional

After 1919, lay interest in the Conference grew progressively less and less. To the same degree the professional interest and the professional emphasis became more and more pronounced. So that by 1929 lay participation had practically disappeared from the Conference. Efforts by some of the professional social workers to bring lay representation back into the Conference were met with either indifference or with definite hostility. The general feeling was that the lay person, "untrained" and "inexperienced," had nothing to offer but resistance to progress and confusion in comprehension. But, not to be denied some headaches, a "rank and file" movement was being launched, consisting of the "underprivileged" on the paid staffs of Jewish social agencies, who, for a time, seriously threatened these older professionals with the capture of the Conference by the younger, radically-minded (some even suspected, communistically-minded) group. This younger group seemed unconcerned about the current problems of Jewish life, beyond the economic aspects. They were convinced that if only our economic and political problems could be solved as perfectly as they manifestly had been in Russia, the solution of *all* other Jewish problems would immediately and automatically follow. A great deal of the strength of this movement came through the support and encouragement of some of the older workers, who were both radical and assimilationist in their leaning.

After three turbulent years another group of younger workers, Labor Zionists in outlook and interests, made their appearance on the Conference horizon and to a degree, checkmated the onrushing force of the earlier group who seemed to possess no positive, constructive philosophy or program for Jewish life here or anywhere else. During the same period of years the stability of the Conference was being still further weakened by withering under-cover and open struggles between the assimilationist and anti-assimilationist members of the Conference. Since 1934 there has been an ominous calm. Some (who may be deluded), regard this calm as the beginning of the end of the Jewish Conference. Others feel that it merely represents the beginning of a new healthy era. Perhaps in recognition of this new era, the Conference changed its name in 1936 to the National Conference of Jewish Social Welfare, and modified its purpose to include: "to formulate principles and programs for the enrichment of Jewish life." Whether it will succeed or not depends on many factors.

III

A New Council

Another portion of the background which needs to be brought into closer focus in order to understand the question "Forward Jewish Social Welfare?" is the

role now being played by the five-year old Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds. An outgrowth of the National Appeals Information Service, a service developed by Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds in 1927, it expanded into its present form in 1932 and two years later absorbed the former Bureau of Jewish Social Research. Since 1935 it has held annual assemblies at dates and places distantly removed from the National Conference of Jewish Social Welfare and in many respects has loomed as a competitor of the Conference in influencing Jewish communal developments, in the organizing of Jewish community life throughout the United States and in setting the norms and standards by which Jewish social service and welfare work shall be guided. Originally an agency which might have been regarded as the servant of Federations and Welfare Funds, it has to a large extent become the teacher, the guide and leader. Intended originally to be of assistance to the administrative departments of Federations and Welfare Funds it has gone beyond into every aspect of the field of Jewish community organization. Planned originally as a Conference of lay persons and Federation executives it now includes increasing numbers of professional workers. Intended originally to operate in the area of Federations and Welfare Fund activity, it now has extended its interest and influence into the various functional fields such as family welfare, child care, medical social work, care of the aged, etc. Recently the Jewish Education group, noting the trend, has petitioned to be included. The Jewish Center group still stubbornly hold back. It might be interesting to explore the "why," but there is no point in going into that matter at this time.

In view of this expansion of influence and activity one is justified in inquiring, "What are the standards, what the objectives, what the norms, what the goals by which and to which you are leading Jewish social work, and in the end Jewish life in America?" Nowhere can one find the articulation of basic principles of Jewish life which the Council accepts, and nowhere a statement of positive objectives in influencing the direction of a progressive and enriching development of Jewish life in America, principles and purposes which one can designate as affirmative and as significantly Jewish. The only answer one finds to this question is in the various articles and publications of the Council which clearly set forth that the organization does not have any particular scheme by which Jewish life should be patterned, and that it does not and cannot have any distinctive point of view. It is open to question whether insistence that *one will not have a point of view,* is not in itself a point of view. It is also open to question whether local patterns of thinking and of work would be accepted by the Council at their face value, and that it would not be interested to change, modify or challenge mildly what is old-fashioned or contrary to good practice in social work. One many easily say, "we wish to stand by 'voluntarism' as our approach to all organized group effort in the United States," but one should define that term and then test one's program and activities to determine whether such an approach is practically possible, and effective.

Be this as it may, the Council continues to grow in strength and effectiveness. By its increasing influence it acts as a definite threat to the older form of association for Jewish philanthropic activity: the National Conference of Jewish Social Welfare.

IV

Has the Conference a Future?

As the cards are now stacked the Jewish Conference seems doomed. However, there is one avenue by which salvation may still be achieved.

There does not now exist any annual gathering of organized Jewish groups of America which cuts across all lines—religious, fraternal, labor, educational, philanthropic, communal, etc. The American Jewish Congress, in original conception, might have achieved that position, but now can only be said to represent a cer-

tain group, or at best a few limited groups in this country.

The *American Jewish Year Book* annually lists national organizations which operate in one or more fields of Jewish communal effort. Approximately sixty to seventy-five of the organizations listed might be regarded as carrying on activities which overlap or cut across the field of interest of other groups. On some questions the B'nai B'rith, the Council of Jewish Women, the Conference on Jewish Relations, the Council of Jewish Federations, the American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Welfare Board and a number of other agencies have a common interest. On other questions, one may find an entirely different alignment of organizations, from the point of view of their interest and their work. Some questions may involve gathering basic statistics about some aspect of Jewish life in America. Other questions may involve action programs such as dealing with anti-Semitism and defamation, training the younger Jewish generation for communal responsibilities and leadership, attempting to aid in the better economic adjustment of Jews, dealing with the German refugee problem, meeting the problems of the Jewish college student, organizing of Jewish community councils, preserving and fostering religion, protecting and safeguarding the civil rights, creating interest in and support of Palestinian work, maintaining activities involving the support of relief and cultural work in foreign lands, and many other varieties of interests on which Jewish groups focus their attention.

At present no machinery exists for bringing representatives of these scores of organizations together to discuss plans and programs for joint handling of their mutual interests. To a great extent each national agency goes forth on its own, disregarding frequently the programs and the efforts of other organizations. Such a division and scattering of forces cannot be conducive to the most constructive use of resources nor of personnel. Whether "unity" can or cannot be achieved is not the question. It should be quite obvious that the problems of Jewish life are such as to require the complete mobilization of every unit of interest and of service into a harmonious cooperative whole.

Perhaps the National Conference of Jewish Social Welfare can become such a forum for the discussion of common problems. And possibly out of such discussion there might come a closer integration of the scattered efforts which now either stale-mate each other or lead to ineffectiveness and occasional futility.

At no time in the history of Jewish life in America has there been such an abundance and variety of problems requiring our intelligent concern and attention. We need no new organizations to deal with them. What we do need is a closer coordination, a more regular and more frequent meeting of minds in order to join our separately weak forces into a more integrated and more effectively functioning whole.

Will Jewish Social Welfare go forward? That will depend not on any one national organization, but on the recognition of the need for better integration by a few of the more important national agencies who could issue a call to all the others to utilize the platform and the forum of the National Conference of Jewish Social Welfare to achieve the benefits likely to flow from earnest joint thinking, joint planning and a fair division of labor and responsibility. In time, such a new emphasis in Conference activity might radically alter the present membership, program and activities of the Conference. In view of our needs, is this such a hopelessly utopian dream?

American "Dawn Men"

By Mortimer J. Cohen

TWO personalities have recently made their bow on the literary scene. They are Harry Bogen, hero of *I Can Get it for you Wholesale,* by Jerome Weidman, and Harry Kaplan of *The Education of H-y-m-a-n K-a-p-l-a-n* by Leonard Q. Ross. Their names are current coin. "Says Harry Bogen," and a gutter vulgarism illuminates an argument. "As Hyman Kaplan would say," and a pearl of wisdom crashes through the King's English. While we genially accept Hyman Kaplan as a Jew in linguistic transition, we are apt to resent Harry Bogen as a caricature of the unethical Jew in the business world. The former stirs friendly laughter; the latter arouses violent antipathy.

We must not, however, be misled into believing that these are Jewish types. The social milieu and the surrounding characters, bearing Jewish names, seem to be Jewish. But, they are not Jews except in name. Harry Bogen and Hyman Kaplan are utterly without Jewish content, Jewish interests, or Jewish significance. Harry Bogen, for example, dislikes the very association with anything Jewish. When his mother, a remnant of the old generation, urges him to marry a Jewish girl, Bogen, though attracted to the young lady, repels the suggestion, and on being pressed for the reason, answers, "Aah, Ma, she's so damn *Jewish*-looking! You take one look at her, you see right away she's a kike from the Bronx." To this his mother retorts, "So that's what's eating you! You're a Jew yourself, aren't you? Haven't you got a little feeling in you? What are you, ashamed of what you are? What are you going to do, go around hiding from people what you are?" And our good-hearted friend Hyman Kaplan reveals as little essential Jewishness. He, too, is completely absorbed by his environment. While he admits that "for som pipple is Chrissmas like for odder pipple is Passover," he maintains the "De most fine, de most beauriful, de most *secret* holiday from de whole bunch" is Christmas. "Ven we hearink abot de beauriful toughts of de Tree Vise Guys who vere follerink a star fromm de dasert! Ven pipple sayink, Oh, Mary Chrissmas! Oh, Heppy Noo Yiss! Oh, bast regotts! Den ve *all* got a varm fillink in de heart for all humanity vhich should be brodders! . . . *You* got de fillink, Mr. Pockheel. *I* got de fillink, dat's no qvastion abot! . . . And vat is it? . . . De Chrissmas Spirits!"

Although these characters tell nothing about Jews and Judaism, they do tell much about the American scene in which they live. They are like glass spheres, empty themselves, but reflecting passing lights and shadows. One of the high purposes of literature is to create character-types embodying social values and standards. In Harry Bogen and Hyman Kaplan the presence of social points of view and clashing standards of life gives us our familiarity with them; their Jewish garb must not confuse and disturb us.

Harry Bogen is a slick, resourceful, small-scale "robber baron." He is a complete immoralist, the apotheosis of aggressive capitalism. The business world has made him hard and heartless. His mother recognizes the change in him from a gentle, loving son to the trickster he gradually became. She asks him, "Why shouldn't you be satisfied with a little, like everybody else? What do you need the whole world money for? . . . You're hard now. That's what business did for you. That's what those rules of yours, that's what *your* way of doing business, did for you. . . . You're changed, Heshie, you're changed." To her chastisement of him, Harry Bogen gives in reply his social philosophy. It is the law of the jungle where dog eats dog, and where the stronger survives. "But that's the way you have to be in business. If *you* haven't got the iron heart, it's the next guy. And that means the *next* guy'll be building up the

bank balance. What the hell, Ma, that's the way things are. In business you got to be that way. . . . Sure I'm changed. Now, instead of bringing you fifteen dollars a week we should try to pay the rent and the butcher and the grocer and the laundry, so now, now I'm bringing you silver fox collars. If you call that being changed, so all right, so I'm changed."

The ultimate ideals for this "robber baron" are no different from those masterful "robber barons" who wreck banks, bribe legislatures, exploit a country's resources — all for material success, for money. Not that these men are without their human side. They indulge in sentimentality. The outlet for their humane instincts is found in the outer world in their philanthropies, in their personal world, in the exaltation of Mother. They create "Mother's Day." We find this in Harry Bogen. He does not pin white carnations in his buttonhole. But he glorifies mother's "blintzes." When his mother asks him why he even comes home, he answers, "For crying out loud, Ma, this is the only place where I can sit down and take a rest without feeling that somebody is going to jump on me from behind. This is the only place where it isn't dog eat dog. . . . I can sit down and stick my legs under the table and eat your blintzes, without thinking about whether somebody is trying to put one over on me or not."

What is the ultimate purpose of all Harry Bogen's striving? The immediate aim, of course, is to make money. He does not altogether enjoy the constant fighting. "All right, maybe I *do* enjoy it. I don't know for sure. Maybe I think I enjoy it because I know it's the only way to *get* any place in this world, it's the only way to make money and buy the things you want and really live like a person, not a dog." But, when we examine what are the things that Harry Bogen wants, apart from the luxuries he can bestow upon his mother, we find that his ultimate ideal is to give a precious diamond necklace to his favorite actress that he might possess her. The odyssey of his whole life is summed up in the last sentences of the book when his hope is about to be realized:

" 'Boy,' I said out loud to the face in the mirror, 'is that Harry Bogen, or am I nuts? Two years ago I was just another poor slob from the Bronx. And tonight I'm going to sleep with an actress!' "

II

Hyman Kaplan, who loved to insert a star after each letter in his name, comes from another stratum of American life. He is the worker who labors by day and seeks to educate himself in a night school after working hours. His English is the despair of his teacher, but his kindly, shrewd mind is given as he himself says to "dip tinking." He, too, is part of the business complex of American life. In his characteristic way he reveals this. On being questioned why he did not go to his friend's funeral, he answered, "Becawss de funeral vas in de meedle of de veek. . . An' I said to minesalf, 'Keplen, you in America, so tink like de *Americans* tink!' So I tought, an' I didn't go. Becawss I tought of dat *dip* American idea, 'Business bafore pleasure!' "

Hyman Kaplan is one of the proletariat. There is a deep, warm, human stream that runs through all his thinking and his doing. Unlike that of Harry Bogen's, the thinking of Hyman Kaplan is social in motivation. He is asked by the teacher to write a composition describing his job. He writes in part as follows:

"Shakspare is saying what fulls man is and I am feeling just the same way when I am thinking about mine job a cotter, in Dress Faktory on 38 st by 7 av. For why should we slafing in dark place by laktric lights and all kinds hot for $30 or maybe $36 with overtime, for Boss who is fat and driving in fency automobil? I ask! Because we are the deprassed workers of world. And are being exployted. By Bosses. . . . And when I am telling Foreman should be better conditions he hollers, Kaplan you radical!"

Kaplan's sense of injustice is stirred, and his primitive indignation voices itself

in his "eye for an eye" threat of retribution.

"But somday will the workers making Bosses to work! And then Kaplan will give to them bad laktric and positively no windows for the air should come in! So they can know what it means to slafe! Kaplan will make Foreman a cotter like he is. And give the most bad dezigns to cut out. Justice."

When his teacher remonstrated with him that he had not described his job but had submitted rather an essay on his attitudes towards his job, Kaplan's defense was, "Dat's because I'm tryink to give *dip ideas;*" moreover, "it's not soch a interestink jop."

All through the "dip tinking" of Hyman Kaplan there is social awareness and social sympathy. It may be crude in action and astoundingly puzzling in verbal expression, but its presence is real. His faith in human reason, in the need of men to learn how to think finds fullest expression in the composition he had to submit in the examination which was to determine whether he could advance to the next higher class in English. He called his composition, "Thinking About" (Humans & Enimals).

"Sometime I feel sad how som people are living. Only sleeping eating working in shop. Not *thinking.* They are just like Enimals the same, which dont thinking also. Humans should not be like Enimals! They should *Thinking!* This is with me a deep idea. . . . By *Thinking* is Humans making big advences on Enimals. This we call Progriss."

Poor Hyman Kaplan knew he could never be promoted in English. However, his association with his teacher and classmates, and his exchange of "dip toughts" with them sufficiently compensated him for his efforts. Thus, at the end of his composition he indited this postscript, "ps. I don't care if I dont pass, I *love* the class."

III

Both these character-types are essentially "primitives," responding to the social forces about them. Harry Bogen is made hard by the competitive environment in which his life was cast. But his original human nature was not what it later necessarily became. ("That's what coming home here at night means to me, Ma. It makes me feel like a human being for a change.") Hyman Kaplan, sharing the struggles, the sufferings, the sacrifices of the workers, evinces that social sympathy and social-mindedness that is the leaven of social progress. ("Den we *all* got a varm fillink in de heart for all humanity vhich should be brodders!") These characters are the predatory and the social types that make up American society today.

Students of society speak of the "Dawn Men" — those first primitive men who stood between the lower animal world out of which they emerged and the human world towards which they were evolving. To become fully human they had to possess qualities of cooperation and social sympathy. Today we, too, stand on the threshold of vast social changes. Harry Bogen and Hyman Kaplan are the "Dawn Men" of this new social order coming into being. The Harry Bogens belong with the mastodons and the pterodactyls of a dying, acquisitive age; the Hyman Kaplans, with all their crudities, are the stuff of which a better, cooperative world can be made.

A Universal Utopia: Pagans Not Admitted

By NATHAN A. BARACK*

I

MODERN thinking people, writes Rabbi David S. Shapiro,** are dissatisfied with the conventional religions of the West. Darwinism has discredited their ritualisms by undermining the mythologies on which they are based. Moreover, traditional religions, with their undue stress on the hereafter, have failed to strive actively for the creation of a just and positive world. Man, however, is no longer contented with the promise of heavenly reward; he craves mundane happiness. Oriental religions, because of their negative outlook on life, are also, therefore, unacceptable.

There is consequently need for a religion that is at once not incompatible with the findings of modern science and one that places man at the center of the universe. Fortunately, such a religion does exist. The Seven Precepts of Noah (*Shebah Mizvot B'nai Noah*) as expounded in Jewish writings, beginning with the Bible and including even the Responsa of the last few centuries, form the basis for a universal religion, non-dogmatic and non-ritualistic in character, and aiming at creating Utopia everywhere.

Fundamental in this religious structure is the belief in a personal God who reveals His will to man. His two revelations, one prior and the other subsequent to the Deluge, were forgotten by mankind. The third was made known through humanity's prophet, Israel. Love of the Creator involves love of His entire creation, from the lowest to the highest creature, and a recognition that nothing is superfluous in the cosmos (including, we presume, disease breeders and harmful plants). Man, created in God's image, merits especial consideration. In all possible ways, there should exist equality and mutual regard among fellow human beings. Wealth, real and personal, is ultimately derived from God. And He demands that its temporary possessors utilize it only in a creative manner.

The goal of the universal religion is a warless and non-imperialistic, but not cosmopolitan world. The members of the international family of nations would be neither democracies nor monarchies but nomocracies, ruled by a class of philosophers fully acquainted with the Seven Precepts and their ramifications. In a world dominated by this religion—which is really a synthesis of the cultural attainments of the West and the ideals of justice and holiness of Israel—man would be liberated from blind dogmatism, and a Kingdom of God stressing the positive and the beautiful in life would be established, according to the author.

II

It is sometimes difficult to follow the reasoning in this well-organized, extremely well-written, but not so clearly thought-out booklet. Its writer seems to be eager to harmonize the Orthodox interpretation of Judaism with all the tenets (including a preference for the internationalism of today over 18th century cosmopolitanism) of modern advanced religious and social thinkers. For if you color liberalism with Bachya's ethical religiosity, you have essentially Rabbi Shapiro's eclectic philosophy. In the last analysis, in what important respect does his universal edition of Judaism differ fom the religion of a Harry Emerson Fosdick or a Preston Bradly? His attempt to discover the liberal outlook in widely diversified Jewish sources as a well-developed and unified system frequently leads him to interesting but confusing deductions. He constructs a universal edifice to house all civilized

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**יסודי הדת האוניברסלית, *The Foundations of a Universal Religion, Based on the Sources of Judaism*, Bloch Pubishing Co., 1936.

nations, but excludes the Jewish people on the ground that Judaism is simply an "elaboration" of universal religion. Even the dietary customs, he maintains, are basically not ritual but ethical laws. May not all creeds advance similar rationalizations for their ceremonial systems? If, as the author naively contends, religious differences cause dissensions among nations and lead to wars, why should not an elaborated version of the universal religion be an equal cause?

The writer searches out isolated statements by individual authors of obscure works to corroborate his contentions; but he is oblivious of incidents and teachings in the Bible that controvert him. At times his own citations actually disprove his thesis. Thus, he quotes the Talmudic dictum that *non-Jews* cannot legally conquer new territories (*Goim lav b'nai kibbush heim*) to prove that Jewish universalism frowns upon territorial expansion by force. Need it be pointed out that the implication is far from a denunciation of imperialism?

It is amusing to note that although Rabbi Shapiro believes that the universal religion not only forbids the closing of immigration doors but also enjoins its adherents to care for needy immigrants in every way, his own "non-dogmatic" universal Utopia would bar its gates to some of mankind's noblest and most courageous battlers for the very world he seeks. Why? Because they were unable to accept the foundation of his structure, namely, the belief in a personal God.

III

The foregoing objections are minor compared with the author's fallacy, shared by simple-minded and biased anti-religionists, that traditional religions, because of their emphasis on false values or because of their failure to act as a stabilizing and rectifying force, are to be blamed for society's maladies. True, religions may become outmoded because they no longer satisfy man's growing spiritual needs. Occasionally they do not succeed in attaining thier *own* avowed goal because they no longer satisfy man's growing spiritual needs. More often they fail because powerful social forces interfere with the successful application of their teachings. Antiquated religious ideologies have been responsible for certain of humanity's setbacks. But no faith can alone be condemned for the failures of mankind. Generally, the shortcomings of religion may be—as in Czarist Russia—one of the causes for our world's sorry plight, but never *the* cause.

For the religious institution, like the legal and the educational, is only one phase of civilization; and although, contrary to the materialists, ideas play an important role in shaping the course of human events, they cannot by themselves remake the world. In the normal interactive process of the forces operating within a civilization, religion molds, and is in turn limited, by the other aspects of the social organism. (Indirectly the writer admits that the religion which he proposes as one destined to transform the world has already twice falied to accomplish its declared purpose.)

There is, therefore, need now not for a new or universal religion. It will be long before our present high ideals, incorporated in the leading religions of the day, will be realized. There is urgent need, however, for a better *civilization,* for more adequate methods in actualizing human aspirations, and for new *conditions* which will facilitate and make *possible* the effectuation of religious ideals. The desire for peace is doubtless the most commonly espoused ideal. And yet, the realization of even this human hope may necessitate not new teachings, not further education, and not only changes in the attitudes of man, but perhaps a new, economically and politically, cooperative universe. Let not ardent pacifists, who struggle to keep at least the United States neutral in a possible world conflagration read Geoffrey Stone's "Neutrality—A Dangerous Myth" (*The Nation,* Sept. 18) if they do not wish their faith badly shaken!

No, idealism cannot be divorced from reality. Religion must bear a realistic re-

lationship to the civilization in which it exists. As the civilization progresses higher ideals are evolved. These come into concrete existence (as was the abolition of slavery) only with the emergence of the various factors conducive to the actualization. This is the social significance of the interpretation of Judaism as an ever-developing civilization, as has been repeatedly pointed out in the *Reconstructionist.*

We have devoted a good deal of space to Rabbi Shapiro's small book, because, despite its faults it is readable, stimulating, and it indirectly raises many important issues. (Whether a universal religion is desirable and possible has already been dealt with in the pages of this journal.) The author deserves high praise for possessing sufficient faith in the Hebrew language to have chosen it as the vehicle for the expression of his ideas, although he surely knew that his circle of readers would have been greater had he chosen English as the medium. His Judaic scholarship, as manifested in his footnotes, is truly amazing.

We hope to see more of his writings in the same unusually lucid Hebrew.

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